

Fisheries resources: recovery of Southern hake and Norway lobster stocks

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The committee adopted the report by Rosa MIGUÉLEZ RAMOS (PES, ES) substantially amending the proposal under the consultation procedure:

- MEPs inserted a reference to the socio-economic measures needed to lessen the impact on the fishing industry of plans to restrict fishing capacity;
- whereas the Commission proposal was geared to a stock-recovery objective which takes fishing mortality as its reference point, the committee preferred a model based on biomass recovery scales over a 10-year period. In the case of hake stocks, this would mean reaching a spawning stock biomass of 35 000 tonnes of hake during two consecutive years or increasing the quantities of mature individuals within 10 years to 35 000 tonnes or more. In the case of Norway lobster MEPs advocated rebuilding the stocks "to within safe biological limits" within a period of 10 years;
- the provisions contained in Chapter III on the calculation of the fishing effort limit had become obsolete and should be deleted. The committee proposed a new Article 7a replacing this chapter by a more appropriate system based on a calculation of total allowable catches (TACs) complemented by a fishing effort limitation scheme based on geographical areas and categories of fishing gear. Member States would receive Community funding for temporary or definitive cessation measures to achieve the objectives of the plan;
- the minimum quantity laid down for mandatory weighing should be increased from 50kg to 300 kg in the case of hake and from 50kg to 150 kg in the case of Norway lobster, to avoid disproportionate costs for stakeholders;
- the Gulf of Cadiz should be excluded from the regulations, given the lack of reliable data on stocks in this area.